



PRESS RELEASE

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AIDEA Files Environmental Review Permit Application for the Multi-use West Susitna Access Project

ANCHORAGE, AK — The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) has submitted its 404 permit application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE,) kick-starting the environmental review of the proposed West Susitna Access Road.

The road is a critical component of the West Susitna Access Project which, if built, will open State lands and resources west of the Susitna River for development and recreation. AIDEA is working in partnership with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough on the project.

As proposed, the project would provide access to the existing road and port system at Port MacKenzie for natural resource development as well as managed public access to recreation resources such as hunting, fishing, boating, snowmachining and others.

“Today marks the beginning of the process to evaluate an access route to unlock opportunities in the fastest-growing region of the state,” said **AIDEA Executive Director Alan Weitzner**. “We know the area is home to tremendous economic potential and offers recreational opportunities for residents of the Mat-Su Borough and all Alaskans.”

The West Susitna Access Project was identified as a priority in the [State of Alaska’s 2014 Road to Resources report](#) for its immense resource potential. The report found that the West Susitna is one of the richest resource regions in Alaska and that a road would provide access to billions of dollars of stranded resources.

In 2019, AIDEA and the Mat-Su Borough agreed to provide a framework for a phased feasibility analysis of the West Susitna Access Project. The Alaska Legislature also sees potential value in the project and in 2021 appropriated \$8.5 million in project funding from the State of Alaska’s capital budget to AIDEA for continued study of the project.

In April of this year, the Mat-Su Borough completed an extensive stakeholder engagement process after assembly members asked for additional public outreach. That effort involved direct mail, virtual meetings, digital advertising, social media posts, and other communications tactics. Opportunity for additional community input is triggered by the USACE approval process, and is part of the Dept. of Natural Resources’ Best Interest

Finding process, which is required as a pre-condition for granting a right of way over State lands.

USACE will evaluate AIDEA's permit application and initiate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance process when they deem appropriate. The USACE will decide how and when the NEPA process begins. Typically, it involves gathering input from stakeholders, conducting detailed analysis, issuing notices, and accepting and responding to public comments, among other actions. This is a necessary step to gather the information that stakeholders have asked for to determine the overall value of this project for Alaskans.

"Alaska is a resource state, and the constitution requires us to evaluate how to maximize the use of our resources to benefit all Alaskans. If built, the proposed West Susitna Road Project would mean much more than extracting the state-owned minerals essential for a modern economy, and the family-wage jobs it creates for Alaskans," **said Governor Mike Dunleavy**. "It would also mean new recreational opportunities for Alaskans and thousands of additional acres of land available for agriculture to help our state be more food secure. The feasibility analysis AIDEA is about to undertake will provide the state and stakeholders with the information needed to make informed decisions about whether or not to proceed with the proposed road project."

AIDEA maintains a [website](#) specific to the West Susitna Access Project. Interested parties can visit the site for new information, sign up for email alerts, and otherwise stay up to date on progress.

About the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the state. AIDEA's purpose is to promote, develop and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska. Since 1967, AIDEA has been responsible for directing more than \$3.5 billion in economic development in Alaska and has declared \$446 million in dividends to Alaska since 1997.

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